

# How to Measure the Impact of Programs

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# Introduction

- Measuring the impacts of arts programs
  - *one of the most essential activities for any organization*
    - *especially for arts organizations*
  - *without careful measurement, we're blind (or delusional)*
  - *to make the case that your organization matters, you need evidence*

# Introduction

- How do we do it?
  - *Plan ahead (ideally)*
    - *Design the evaluation into your programs*
  - *Collect data or evidence (always)*
    - *Use what you already have, and get even more*
  - *Analyze it (properly)*
  - *Leverage the results for improvements*

# Outline

- A primer on program evaluation
  - Why ... and why not
- Steps to evaluation
- The “Textbook”
  - Design
  - Data
- 5 Lessons
- Examples

# The motivation

- Why bother?
  - Wouldn't it be nice to know:
    - Is your organization achieving success?
    - How effective are particular programs?
  - Do your stakeholders expect or demand evidence of impacts?
- Great power, ability to steer your ship if you know doing A leads to B
- Purposeful, systematic measurement beats steering blindly or using your gut

# The pitfalls

- Weak metrics/measures
  - Perfection is rare. But some metrics
    - miss the mark too far (imprecise, unrelated)
    - capture other influences (bias)
- Weak design
  - selection bias, omitted variables
- Making or picking winners?
  - Happy people listen to jazz which makes people happy...

# The approach

- Design
  - Most pitfalls avoided with forethought
  - Most good designs cost something
- Collect
- Analyze
- Report

# The approach

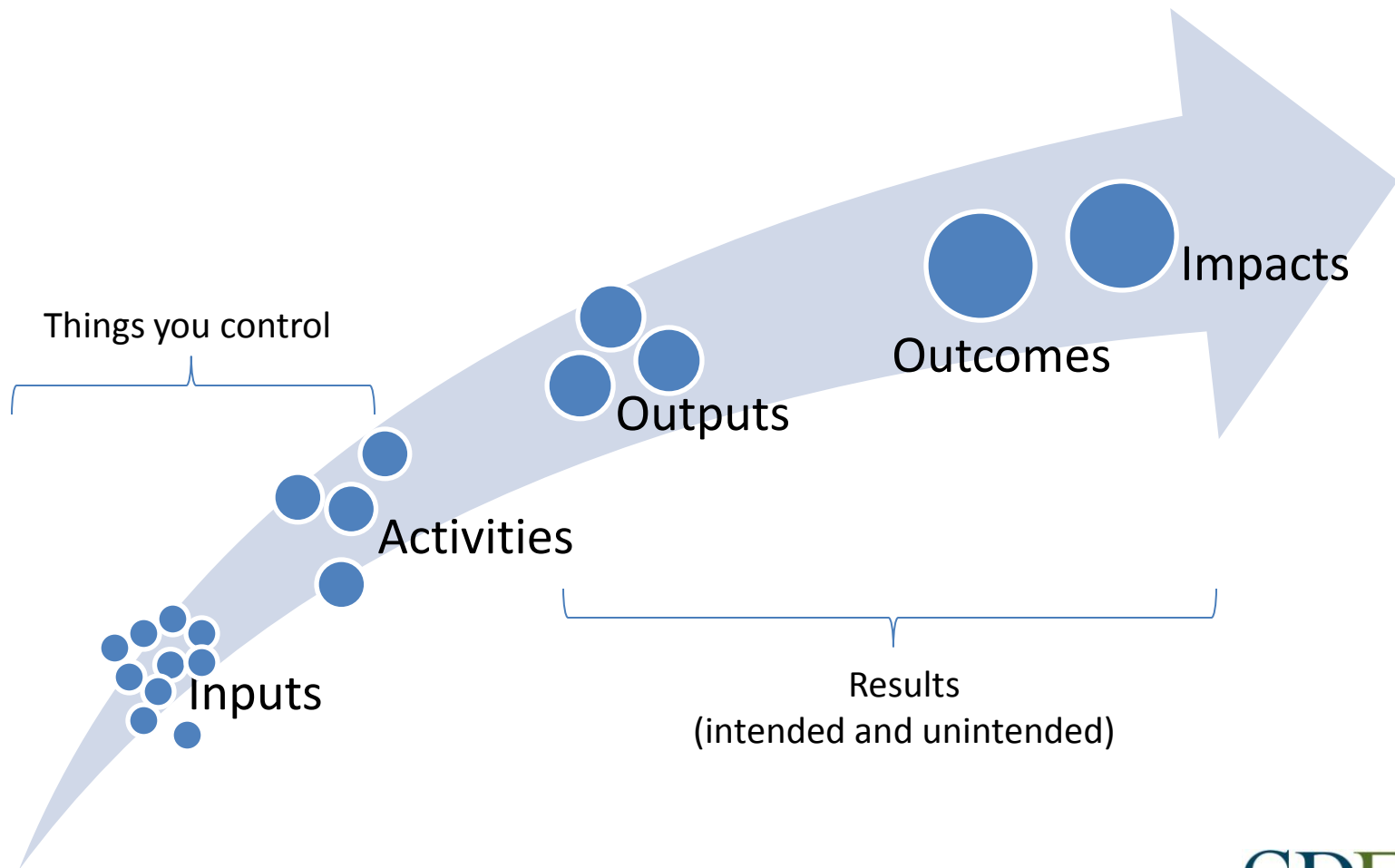
- **Design**
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- **Collect**
- Analyze
- Report

Make it part of the org.'s planning!



# The textbook

- Inputs
- Activities and Outputs
  - Results of the inputs; org. directly controls
  - The “what?”: factual, easily measured
- Outcomes
  - Effects and effectiveness of the outputs
  - The “so what?”: subjective, indirect effects
- Impacts
  - Think of these as longer-term goals
  - They’re dynamic; they can change years after a program ends



# Some impacts

- increase people's confidence and sense of self-worth
- extend involvement in social activity
- give people influence over how they are seen by others
- stimulate interest and confidence in the arts
- provide a forum to explore personal rights and responsibilities
- contribute to the educational development of children
- encourage adults to take up education and training opportunities
- help build new skills and work experience
- contribute to people's employability
- help people take up or develop careers in the arts
- reduce isolation by helping people to make friends
- develop community networks and sociability
- promote tolerance and contribute to conflict resolution
- provide a forum for intercultural understanding and friendship
- help validate the contribution of a whole community
- promote intercultural contact and Cooperation
- develop contact between the Generations
- help offenders and victims address issues of crime
- provide a route to rehabilitation and integration for offenders
- build community organisational Capacity
- encourage local self-reliance and project management
- help people extend control over their lives
- be a means of gaining insight into political and social ideas
- facilitate effective public consultation and participation
- help involve local people in the regeneration process

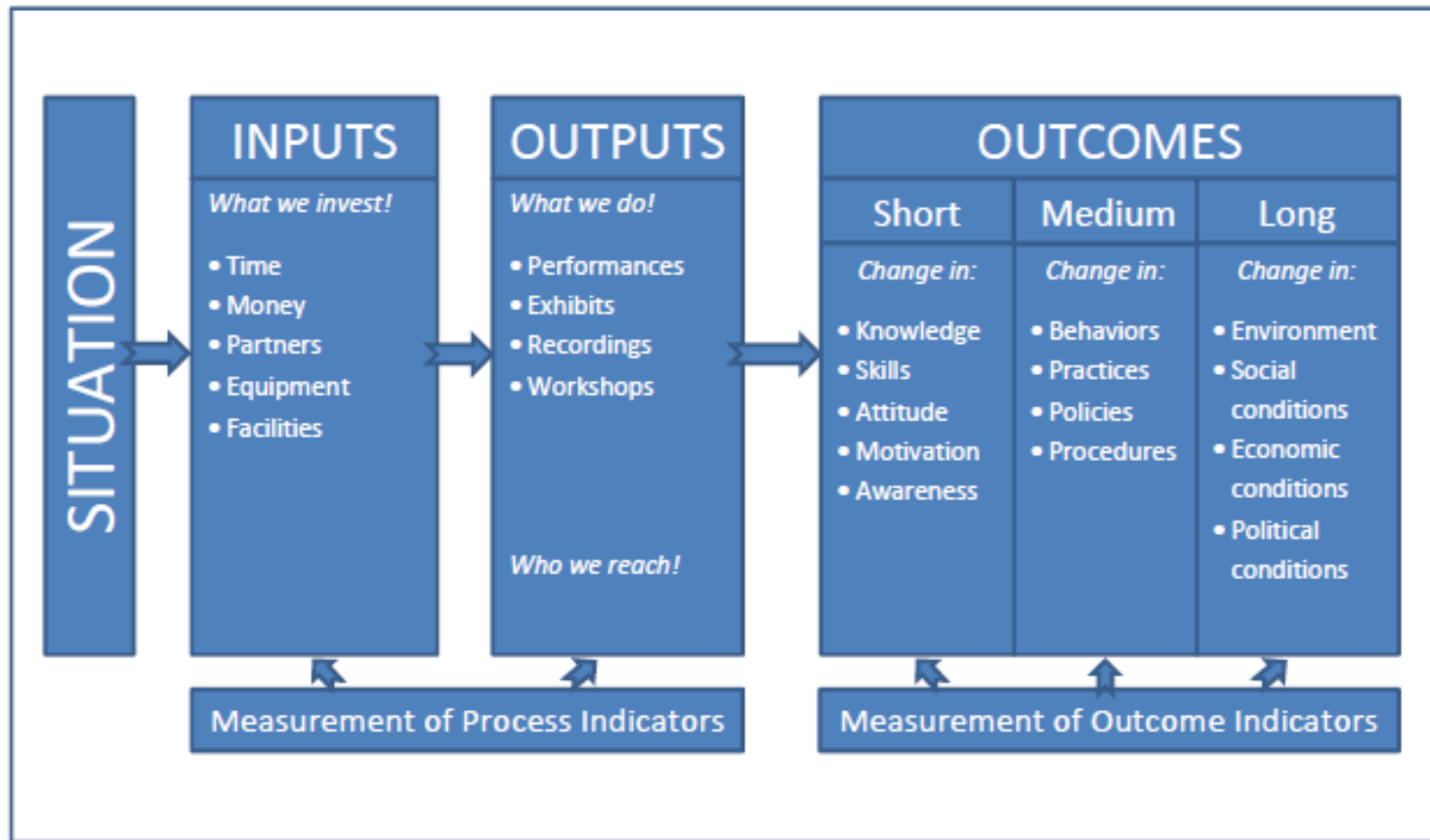
# Some impacts

- facilitate the development of partnership
- build support for community projects
- strengthen community cooperation and networking
- develop pride in local traditions and cultures
- help people feel a sense of belonging and involvement
- create community traditions in new towns or neighbourhoods
- involve residents in environmental improvements
- provide reasons for people to develop community activities
- improve perceptions of marginalised groups
- help transform the image of public bodies
- make people feel better about where they live
- help people develop their creativity
- erode the distinction between consumer and creator
- allow people to explore their values, meanings and dreams
- enrich the practice of professionals in the public and voluntary sectors
- transform the responsiveness of public service organisations
- encourage people to accept risk positively
- help community groups raise their vision beyond the immediate
- challenge conventional service delivery
- raise expectations about what is possible and desirable
- have a positive impact on how people feel
- be an effective means of health education
- contribute to a more relaxed atmosphere in health centres
- help improve the quality of life of people with poor health
- provide a unique and deep source of enjoyment

# Some common impacts

- **Organizational** impacts
  - Attendance, membership, profits, recognition
  - Organizational health, sustainability
- **Personal** impacts
  - Satisfaction
  - Awareness, perceptions, understanding
  - Other takeaways
- **Social** impacts
  - Economic impact
  - Social capital, networks, community strength
  - Neighborhood vitality, livability, aesthetics

## LOGIC MODEL: THEORY OF CHANGE



# Some common data

- Internal recordkeeping
  - Transactions data, turnstiles, memberships
  - Website traffic, FourSquare, etc.
  - New data(!), observations
- Surveys\*
  - Audiences, membership, et al.
  - Intercept, mail, phone, email, etc.
  - Focus groups, interviews
- Public datasets
  - Permits, traffic, tax receipts, demographics
  - Newspapers, community calendars

\* Much harder than it looks. Specialized workshops...

# Some common techniques

- Experimental designs
  - Pre- / post-
  - (Quasi) random assignment
- Non-designs
  - Self-reporting and self-assessing
  - Expert opinion
  - Anecdotes



# Using the results

- Analytics
  - There is help out there
  - Simplicity can work best.
  - Basics, like means and “t-tests” are powerful and harder to muck up
- The key is the **counterfactual**  
*What would things be like if we hadn't done it?*
  - Careful, objective thought goes a long way here
    - How much of these outcomes would have occurred anyway?
  - Often, our best is to assume a “worst” (conservative) case

# Using the results

- Presenting your results matters
  - *\*Another* day-long workshop
  - Presenting qualitative results can be potent
  - Anticipate obtaining evidence on impacts; use it strategically
    - Timing for info release
    - Use it to adjust programming? Ask for more funds?
    - Put your best foot forward:  
track where you anticipate biggest and best impacts

# Key lessons

- Five key lessons for managers
  1. Beware of bias
    - survey questions, samples, comparison groups, etc.

# Key lessons

- Five key lessons for managers
  1. Beware of bias
  2. Correlation is not causation; causation is hard
    - A more compelling case than just “cream skimming”

# Key lessons

- Five key lessons for managers
  1. Beware of bias
  2. Correlation is not causation; causation is hard
  3. Think on the margins
    - Some people, on “free days,” would have attended anyway

# Key lessons

- Five key lessons for managers
  1. Beware of bias
  2. Correlation is not causation; causation is hard
  3. Think on the margins
  4. Be creative (with quantifying impacts)
    - Be brave
    - Get good at this!

# Key lessons

- Five key lessons for managers
  1. Beware of bias
  2. Correlation is not causation; causation is hard
  3. Think on the margins
  4. Be creative (with quantifying impacts)
  5. Plan ahead and integrate measurement into implementation
    - Be mindful before it's too late
    - Get help

# In practice...

- Offer a “free day”?
  - Track turnstile, gift shop, memberships, etc.
  - Survey visitors on regular and free days
- Have a new exhibit in your museum or a new public art installation?
  - Track (geotagged) photos/tweets related to the area before vs. after
- Have an educational program?
  - Randomly vary content/audience



# Does watching *Food, Inc.* change your life?

- Impact is very tricky here: selection bias
- Johanna Blakley at the Norman Lear Center (USC) got creative
- Watch the video here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pb0FZPzzWuk>

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participant  
MEDIA

home

company

JOIN LOGIN

Follow Us



facebook

Search



FOOD, INC.

- Wall
- Info
- Friend Activity (1)
- Photos

Food Inc

Movie



Wall

SHARE + BOOKMARK TEXT SIZE A A A  
BLOG MULTIMEDIA ALLIANCES READING LIST

Hungry For Change

FOOD, INC. ABOUT THE ISSUES TAKE ACTION

BLOG MULTIMEDIA ALLIANCES READING LIST

You'll never

Academy Award Nominee  
Best Documentary Feature

SPEA  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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# PROPENSITY SCORE MATCHING (PSM)

## Phase One:

- Find Factors that predict the likelihood of a subject being exposed to the intervention
- Create a model based on those predictors

## Phase Two:

- Assign propensity scores
- Compare exposed to unexposed

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SAW FOOD, INC.



DIDN'T SEE FOOD, INC.





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  - Deliberately nonrandom: got lots who saw the film, and lots who didn't
  - Statistically created “twins” (separated at the box office?)
    - Those who did see the flick ultimately differed...







**Encourage friends,  
family & colleagues  
to learn more about  
food safety**

**Shop at their local  
farmers markets**



**Encourage friends,  
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to learn more about  
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**Shop at their local  
farmers markets**

**Eat healthy food**



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# Another example

- Sapphire Theatre has been embedded in today's presentation.
  - What are its impacts?
  - How might we measure them?